

## 1 Corinthians Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Jon Courson, NIV Study Bible, Warren Wiersbe, Matthew Henry, Damian Kyle, David Guzik, Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, and Alan Redpath.

### Introduction:

On Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey, Paul spent 1½ years in Corinth (Acts 18). The visit occurred after his very short stay in Athens and before a 3-year stay in Ephesus. This was about 50-52 AD.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus. (Acts 19; 1 Cor. 5:9)

Corinth, located in south-central Greece, was a city synonymous with immorality, drunkenness, and prostitution. It was a city of about 80,000 citizens. In addition, there were many slaves and foreign travelers. Corinth was a city of commerce because it was located as a land route connecting the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. But Corinth was most famous for its temples to the gods, especially Aphrodite/Venus which was served by over 1,000 temple prostitutes offering themselves for free in service to the goddess. If a Corinthian was portrayed in Greek theater, they were always portrayed as drunks.

This letter to the church at Corinth has two major themes:

- 1 Cor. 1-11 deals with correcting the problems of the church: carnal issues.
- 1 Cor. 12-16 deals with establishing the proper use of gifts in the church: spiritual matters.

Paul's second visit to Corinth can be found in Acts 20:2-3.

### Chapter 1:

1:1-9 – “Jesus Christ” – 9 times.

1:1 – “called an apostle” – This is Paul's calling by God. He is establishing his authority as it comes from God from the outset of this letter.

- “Sosthenes” – He is likely the same man who opposed Paul and the Christian work as the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, but was beaten by the Roman counsel when he decided in favor of Paul. (Acts 18:17)
  - Sosthenes apparently became the ruler of the synagogue because the previous ruler, Crispus, became a follower of Jesus Christ. (Acts 18:8)
  - It is reasonable to believe that Paul physically cared for the beaten Sosthenes, and in doing so, turned him from opposition to the Christian faith to a fellow follower of Jesus Christ.

1:2 – “church” – (Greek “ecclesia”) Lit. “called out ones.”

- The “ecclesia” was the name of the Roman counsel in Corinth. Here Paul connects the word to God and His collective representatives.
- “at Corinth...in Christ” – Every Christian has two addresses.
  - The problems come “at Corinth,” but the solutions come “in Christ.”
- “sanctified” – (Greek “haggios”) Lit. “set apart for a specific purpose.”
- “called saints” – The “to be” is not in the original and confuses the sense. We are not saints because of something that we will grow into, we are saints at the point of our conversion due to the finished work of Jesus Christ applied to our lives.
  - God had told Paul that He had “many people in this city.” (Acts 18:10)
- “with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus” – That includes us.

- 1:3 – “Grace...peace” – They always come in that order.
- “Grace” – (Greek “charis”) It is a word of Greek origin and implies a gift.
  - “peace” – The Hebrew for peace is “shalom” and implies wholeness.
- 1:4 – “I thank my God always concerning you” – This is an amazing statement considering the sin in the church and the criticism Paul is taking from them. (2 Cor. 10:10)
- Paul balances rebuke with appreciation. They are not being scolded by someone who has not made a significant investment into their lives and well-being.
  - It may not be your place to point out a problem if you are not willing to stick around to help solve it.
  - “the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus” – God’s grace comes through Jesus to us.
- 1:5 – “enriched” – They are like influential millionaires.
- “utterance” – (Greek “logos”) Lit. “word.”
- 1:7 – “gift” – (Greek “charisma”) Paul will talk about the gifts extensively in chapters 12-14.
- They have all the gifts, even though they aren’t handling them very well.
  - “revelation” – (Greek “apokalupsis”) Lit. “unveiling.”
  - This is referring to the second coming of Jesus Christ.
  - The imminent return of Christ is a prevalent NT doctrine occurring over 300 times.
  - Paul is asking them to live as if Jesus will return today.
- 1:8 – “blameless” – This is due to the sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ.
- 1:9 – “fellowship” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “all things in common.”
- Paul is referring to the fellowship we have with God’s Son, Jesus Christ.
  - Our main calling is not to a job or a work, but to fellowship with God Himself. God is always more concerned with the servant than their service.
- 1:10 – “all speak the same thing” – Unity is an essential component of our testimony. (John 13:35; 17:21)
- “divisions” – (Greek “schismata”) Lit. “to tear or rend.”
  - It is okay to make distinctions without making divisions in the body of Christ.
  - “When men divide the body of Christ, who bleeds?” (Chuck Smith)
  - “I am convinced that the more spiritual a man becomes the less denominational he becomes” – G. Campbell Morgan.
- 1:11 – “declared” – Lit. “a detailed account.” This is a careful record. It is not gossip.
- It is typically gossip if it is shared with someone who has no responsibility in the matter.
  - “contentions” – Lit. “heated arguments.”
- 1:12 – “Paul...Apollos...Cephas” – They have created a party under the names of these men who have served God and the church.
- “of Christ” – This may be the most self-righteous of them all.
- 1:13 – “baptized” – They are also creating divisions over baptism.

1:14 – “I thank God that I baptized none” – Paul could not say that if baptism was necessary for salvation.

- Baptism is a public testimony to the work God has done in our hearts.

1:17 – “the gospel” – This is essential to our salvation.

- The good news of Jesus Christ is “the message of the cross” mentioned in v. 18.
- “wisdom of words” – can also be translated “cleverness of speaking.”
  - To speak in the “Corinthian style” was to be very smooth and philosophical.
  - Paul does not want the basis to their faith to be his wisdom or eloquence of speech, but in the truth and the power of God contained in the gospel itself. (1 Cor. 2:4-5; see also Rom. 1:16)
- “cross of Christ made of no effect” – It is possible to preach the gospel in a way that makes it of no effect. (Ezek. 33:30-33)

1:18 – “the message” – (Greek “logos”) Lit. “the word.”

- “are perishing” – Apart from Jesus, all are currently condemned and in the process of perishing.
- “the power of God” – No human psychology or philosophy or educational system can change a life like the reality of Jesus Christ accepted into a life.

1:19 – “wisdom of the wise” – In the context of this quote from Isa. 29:14, Israel is looking to Egypt for help. But their human reason and wisdom will only lead to their destruction.

- “wise...prudent” – When facing death and eternity, it doesn’t matter how smart a person is; all that matters is what they have done with Jesus.
  - Accepting Jesus is foolishness to the world. We are either changed as little children or we do not get in at all.

1:20 – “God made foolish” – Compared to the wisdom of God, all our wisdom is foolishness.

- “this world” – Lit. “this age.”

1:21 – “the wisdom of God” – God’s ways are higher than our ways. (Isa. 55:8-9; see also v. 25)

- The knowledge of God comes through revelation. It is by faith that we receive and believe what He has already said of Himself. (Luke 10:21-22)
- “know” – (Greek “gnosco”) Lit. “experiential knowledge.” This knowledge comes through a vital, living relationship with God through Jesus.
- “it pleased God” – This was Paul’s primary goal in ministry. (2 Cor. 5:9)

1:22 – “the Jews request a sign” – Jesus said the sign they would receive is the sign of the prophet Jonah. (Matt. 16:1-4)

1:23 – “to the Jews a stumbling block” – Religious individuals are offended at the grace of the gospel.

- “to the Greeks foolishness” – Those who value human wisdom scoff at the simplicity of faith.
- “Jews...Greeks” – We don’t target the Jews of the Greeks, the moderns or the postmoderns, but we share Jesus Christ and those we are “being saved” (Acts 2:47) will respond.

1:26 – “your calling” – Our salvation comes to us on the basis of God’s choosing.

- God pursues the lost sinners. (Luke 19:10)
- “not many wise” – It doesn’t say “not any.”
  - The majority of the first disciples were “uneducated and untrained men.” (Acts 4:13)
  - Paul was an educated scholar and religious observer, and still God chooses him.
  - It is the sick who need a physician. (Mark 2:17)

1:28 – “base” – Lit. “low born.” This speaks of social class and standing.

1:29 – “no flesh should glory” – God chooses to use simple messengers to communicate the simple message so that God Himself will be recognized.

- The messenger is never more important than the message.

1:30 – “of Him...from God” – God Himself is the initiator in this work. We are the responders.

- “Jesus, who became wisdom for us” – It is not just that Jesus gives us wisdom, but He is the wisdom of God for us.
- “righteousness and sanctification” – Where Christ is made righteousness to my soul, He is also made sanctification. He never discharges from the guilt of sin, without delivering from the power of it.
- “and redemption” – In the end Christ will be the complete redemption, freeing the soul from the very being of sin.

1:31 – “let him glory in the Lord” – There will be no bragging in heaven; God will get all the glory. (Jer. 9:23-24)

## **Chapter 2:**

2:1 – “did not come with excellence of speech” – Paul does not want them to boast in him.

- There is a world of difference between pride in one’s self and confidence in God.

2:2 – “determined not to know anything among you except Jesus” – Paul had come to Corinth after a short stay in Athens. At Athens, Paul was ridiculed for speaking on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. But when he comes to Corinth, He resolves further to only speak the message of the cross to them.

- Paul, because of his great intellect, had to determine (thereby reducing himself to some degree) to share the word of God simply.

2:4 – “demonstration of the Spirit and of power” – Without the Holy Spirit and the power of God, no speaking can be effective.

- God often interjects in the teaching of His word to give an exhortation or word of prophecy that the speaker themselves didn’t even fully grasp until it came out of him by the Spirit.
- “demonstration” – Lit. “legal proof presented in court.”

2:5 – “faith...in the power of God” – This simple and unmixed delivery of the gospel forced others to put their trust in God alone. They either responded to God, or they didn’t respond at all.

- Our job is to share the truth; it is God’s work to win people to Christ.

2:6 – “mature” – Spiritually mature.

- “are coming to nothing” – The world in its present form is passing away. (1 John 2:17)

- 2:7 – “mystery” – (Greek “musterion”) This speaks of information previously unknown, but now revealed to the initiated.
- “our glory” – Out glory is to share in His glory.
- 2:9 – “Eye has not seen...” – The context here is to unbelievers. Those who are not born again do not have the agent of the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s truth.
- 2:10 – “revealed” – (Greek “apokalypsis”) Lit. “unveiling.”
- “through His Spirit” – John 6:44
- 2:11 – “except the spirit of the man which is in him” – A man can only really know the man the lies within his own heart.
- 2:12 – “world” – Lit. “cosmos.” Speaking of the natural world.
- “freely” – Lit. “undeservedly.”
- 2:13 – “the Holy Spirit teaches” – Man’s wisdom cannot understand spiritual things.
- He does not say that man’s wisdom is valueless in things of the world. But it is valueless in spiritual things.
- 2:14 – “natural” – (Greek “psuchikos”) Lit. “of the human mind.” This is thinking that is guided by the material world. This is human reason that is informed by the five senses.
- Science limits its knowledge to that which is repeatable, testable, and measureable by the senses. By definition, it cannot speak on spiritual things.
  - The god of this age has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe. (2 Cor. 4:4)
  - “discerned” – The idea is “grasped, taken hold of.”
- 2:15 – “spiritual judges all things” – The Holy Spirit can lead us into all spiritual truth. (John 15:26-16:15; 1 John 2:27)
- The Corinthian church was not living up to their capacity. Rather than functioning in a spiritual way, they are living carnally. (1 Cor. 3:1)
  - “rightly judged by no one” – Only the Holy Spirit really knows what is happening in our hearts.
- 2:16 – “mind of Christ” – This is given to us by the Spirit within us. (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:27)

### **Chapter 3:**

- 3:1 – “brethren” – Paul is speaking to believers throughout this passage.
- The natural man is the unbeliever who has not been indwelt by God’s Spirit. The spiritual man is the believer who is filled by and walking in God’s Spirit. The carnal man is the believer who, though capable of walking in the Spirit, still resorts back to the natural ways and thoughts of the unsaved individual. It is the carnal man that Paul is specifically addressing here. (v. 3)
  - “babes in Christ” – Spiritual immaturity is acceptable from the young, but ought not be a mark of those who have had a relationship with Jesus for a longer time.
    - Babies cannot feed themselves, cannot clean themselves, and are entirely self-centered.
    - When a person ages and they do not develop maturity, it is likely the result of a disability.

- 3:2 – “milk, and not with solid food” – Carnality is marked by little or no hunger for the Word.
- “Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Heb. 5:14)
  - “like mere men” – Believers are no longer limited to their humanness.
- 3:4 – “are you not yet carnal?” – Division, strife, and jealousy are marks of carnality. (Prov. 13:10; James 4:1)
- Believers that have been walking with the Lord for some time should move past this baby stage.
- 3:5 – “ministers” – (Greek “diaconi”) True ministers are most comfortable when they are serving. They are not meant to be recognized and elevated.
- 3:6 – “I planted, Apollos watered” – There is diversity in ministry even while there is unity in the reason for the ministry. Paul and Apollos are working together while doing different things.
- There is no harvest without both the planting and the watering. They are not competing, but complimentary.
  - “planted...watered” – Past tense.
  - “God gave the increase” – It is the minister’s responsibility to make the ministry what God wants it to be. It is God’s responsibility to use it and bring results.
    - “Real fruitfulness in ministry happens when we are peacefully content with what God has called us to do” – David Guzik.
    - This is often used as a cop-out for mediocre ministry, but rather should be a motivation to seek divine blessing and power.
  - “gave the increase” – The continual present tense. The fruitfulness of the service continues long after the service has been rendered.
- 3:8 – “he who plants and he who waters are one” – Both are servants of the same King.
- “own reward” – Rewards are personal, between me and Jesus.
    - Rewards are not salvation; salvation is a gift of God. Rewards are rendered for service done as a follower of Jesus Christ.
  - “according to his own labor” – We are rewarded based on faithfulness to the work, and not based on results.
    - Out part is to plant and water, but God alone brings the increase. (v. 6)
- 3:9 – “God’s fellow workers” – We work “with” Jesus, not “for” Jesus.
- “field...building” – God is like a farmer and a carpenter. (2 Tim. 2:6)
- 3:10 – “master builder” – The idea is of an architect.
- “how” – Not “if.” All Christians are in the ministry. The question is not if, but how well you have done with the good works foreordained for you. (Gal. 6:7-8; Eph. 2:10)
    - God evaluates the motive behind the work, as well as the work itself. (Rom. 14:23)
- 3:11 – “other foundation” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another foundation of the same kind.”
- These are the “Jesus and...” teachings. (Matt. 16:13-20; see also Isa. 28:16)

3:13 – “the Day will declare it” – George Whitfield’s response to those who criticized his ministry.  
- “revealed by fire” – or “tried by fire.”  
- “what sort it is” – Heavenly and eternal, or earthly and temporary. (2 Cor. 5:10)  
- We can use our material existence to secure for us a spiritual inheritance.  
- Our service for the Lord is judged more on quality than quantity. A lot of work done the wrong way still counts as nothing in God’s perspective and will be consumed by fire in that judgment.

3:15 – “burned” – 2 Peter 3:9-12 tells us that this earth will be burned with a fervent heat.  
- “He is no fool who gives what he could never keep to gain what he can never lose” – Jim Eliot.  
- “he himself will be saved” – We cannot lose our salvation as a result of not serving the Lord properly. We just may not have any rewards to take with us as we go to heaven.  
- Not all Christians are going to hear our Savior say “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Some will simply hear “enter into your rest.”

3:16 – “you” – Plural. He is talking to us as the church as being the temple of God.  
- In 1 Cor. 6:12-20, he speaks to us as individuals as the temple of God.  
- “temple” – (Greek “naous”) Lit. “the inner sanctuary, place of God’s presence.”  
- “the spirit of God dwells in you” – Jesus walks in the midst of the lampstands. (Rev. 1:12-13)

3:17 – “God will destroy him” – The consequence of causing division in the body of Christ.  
- “destroy” – Lit. “diminish.” This is not damnation.  
- God will take believers who are corrupting His Church. (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:30)

3:18 – “wise in this age” – Like Demas. (2 Tim. 4:10)

3:19 – “this world” – This is all temporary.  
- “foolishness” – (Greek “moria”) Lit. “moron-ish.”

3:20 – “the Lord knows” – Quoted from Psalm 94:11.

3:22 – “all are yours” – These people are for the benefit of the whole. (Eph. 4:11-12)  
- A believer filled with the Holy Spirit can learn from anything.

3:23 – “you are Christ’s” – We belong to Him.

#### **Chapter 4:**

4:1 – “servants” – Lit. “under-rowers.” Those who row at the bottom of a galley ship. (Mark 9:35)  
- Paul wants them to view their spiritual leaders as servants, and not as gurus. (1 Cor. 1:12)  
- “stewards” – This was the slave responsible to watch over the materials of the master.  
- The trick is to watch over everything, without owning anything.

4:2 – “faithful” – This is the only requirement for a servant.  
- Faithfulness requires two things: 1. Doing with our gifts what God wants us to do with them (Luke 19:11-27), and 2. Multiplying our gifts (Matt. 25:14-30).  
1. Faithful with our relationship with God.  
2. Faithful with our relationships in our family. (1 Tim. 3:4-5)  
3. Faithful with our relationships in the Church.

- 4:3 – “very small thing” – Their opinion of Paul was not that important to him.
- This is very important in the public ministry. You cannot do what God wants if you care too much about what people want.
  - In our ministry to people, we are to be obedient to God above all else. (Acts 13:2)
- 4:4 – “I know of nothing against myself” – This is after all Paul had done before he was saved. He truly did forget the things that are behind; he did not live under the guilt of it. (Phil. 3:13)
- “not justified by this” – Paul wasn’t proud. He knew he would be judged by God.
  - “judges” – Lit. “is examining.” Present tense. God presently refines His servants.
- 4:5 – “before the time” – The Day will declare it. (1 Cor. 3:13)
- “counsels” – or “motives.” God’s judgment looks down to the motives.
  - “of the hearts” – “All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:12)
  - “praise will come from God” – Apparently the judgment of our service will be more positive than negative.
- 4:6 – “figuratively” – Paul is using himself and Apollos as examples of all ministers in the Church.
- “not to think beyond what is written” – Paul wants them to see him as God sees him.
  - “which is written” – The Scriptures are the measuring stick of a human life. (Matt. 7:1-2)
- 4:7 – “what do you have that you did not receive” – “Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17)
- “why do you boast” – It is a mockery to the Creator to esteem one created person over another.
- 4:8-9 – “You are already full...we have been made a spectacle to the world” – Which would I rather be?
- 4:9 – “spectacle” – or “theater.”
- The Roman armies had a practice of feeding prisoners to lions at the conclusion of a victory march into the city.
  - “both to angels and to men” – Our lives are being viewed by more than we really understand.
- 4:10 – “you are wise in Christ” – Paul makes this sarcastic statement knowing there is immorality being accepted in the church.
- “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:17)
  - It is apparently fairly easy for a church to think they are doing better than they really are.
- 4:13 – “the filth of the world” – (Greek “perikatharma”) The Greeks used this term to speak of a person sacrificed to the gods in an effort to make expiation for the people.
- Stewardship is humbling and requires sacrifice. (I hate watching other peoples’ stuff...the beach, a restaurant, etc. It is constraining.)
  - “offscouring” – The dirt that is removed when cleaning a dish.

4:14 – “to shame you” – A good father can scold his child without shaming them.

4:15 – “instructors” – (Greek “paidagogoi”) Lit. “tutors, instructors.” These were slaves responsible for getting the master’s children to and from their lessons and observing their general conduct.

- “fathers” – A spiritual father has a God-given responsibility of authority and discipline that an instructor does not. (Matt. 23:9)
- That is one reason why being connected to a local church carries more significance than listening to teaching online or watching services on TV.
- We live in an era of spirituality without accountability. “Itching ears...” (2 Tim. 4:3)
- Discipleship occurs in the context where administration and organization are Biblical and consistent with teaching and counsel.

4:16 – “imitate me” – Paul lived in such a way that he could invite others to scrutinize his life and follow his example.

4:17 – “I have sent Timothy” – Timothy is already on his way.

- Regarding Timothy, Paul wrote, “For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.” (Phil. 2:20)

4:19 – “I will come to you shortly” – Paul is warning them.

- “puffed up” – Lit. “gas bags.”

4:20 – “in power” – It is the power to change a life. (2 Tim. 3:5)

- Religion doesn’t have that power; only a personal relationship with God really changes a life from the inside out.

4:21 – “with a rod, or in love” – A father brings both. A child should prefer love over the rod.

- A spiritual father doesn’t just say what he wants to say; he says what needs to be said for the benefit of those he is leading.

## **Chapter 5:**

5:1 – “actually reported” – Lit. “this is common or public knowledge.”

- “sexual immorality” – (Greek “porneia”) Lit. “any sexual activity outside the context of Biblical marriage.”
- “his father’s wife” – This man is living in a sexual relationship with his step-mother. (Lev. 18:8; Deut. 22:30; 27:20)
- Paul calls the sin and man out in front of the rest of the congregation. (Matt. 18:15-17)
- The woman is not mentioned. She is probably not a part of the fellowship, and it is likely that she is not even a believer.

5:2 – “you are puffed up” – They are proud of the sin they are allowing in their fellowship.

- They have become more accepting than God. (Rev. 21:8)
- When we go from being convicted of sin to parading it in the streets, we are in a very dangerous place.

- 5:3 – “judged” – We have a responsibility to discern without condemning. (Matt. 7:1-6; 1 Cor. 2:15)
- Christian ministers are to discipline like a father, not punish like a police officer.
- 5:5 – “deliver such a one to Satan” – Removing this man from the covering of the church.
- Public sins must be dealt with publicly. (Confronting sin publically is to be limited to those actually and personally affected by the sin.)
  - When Paul writes of this experience in 2 Corinthians, he says it was “out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears.” (2 Cor. 2:4)
  - “the destruction of the flesh” – This is not sufficient reason for corporeal punishment in the Church. He’s not talking about the body, but the carnal part of their nature that motivates to sin.
    - People need to feel the consequences of their bad decisions to help motivate change.
    - Children raised in freedom but without responsibility typically become selfish, foolish, and brash. Children raised with a lot of responsibility but no freedom typically become weak, enslaved, and legalistic.
  - “that the spirit may be saved” – Church discipline always has an eye to restoration.
    - 2 Cor. 2:6-11 implies that this man was changed and restored to the church.
    - The Church is a hospital...but no hospital allows patients to come in with a major illness, refuse treatment, and then walk around to infect the others getting treatment.
    - “They couldn’t just ignore his sin, and let him ignore it, pretending it wasn’t there. If the man refused to face his sin, the church must face it for him, for his sake and for their sake.” (David Guzik) To condone and allow willful sin leads to a false sense of security. And the worst thing any church can do is comfort someone headed to destruction.
- 5:6 – “glorying is not good” – Celebrating ungodly liberalism in the name of grace is not good.
- “leaven” – Leaven, or yeast, is a picture of sin throughout the Bible.
    - He is talking about the ease at which sin of this sort infects and influences the whole church.
- 5:8 – “the feast” – During the Passover Feast, the Jewish family made a complete purge of leaven from their house.
- “malice” – The motivations of the heart.
  - “wickedness” – The actions resulting from impure motives.
  - “sincerity and truth” – Be real and be right.
  - “sincerity” – (Greek “sine sera”) Lit. “without wax, without admixture.”
- 5:9 – “epistle” – Paul had written a previous letter with these instructions.
- 5:10 – “people of this world” – There are two standards; one for the believer and another for the unbeliever.
- “idolaters” – Idolatry is an indication that we have left off the current presence of God, in that we feel the need to erect a shrine to remember something God did in the past.

- 5:11 – “anyone named a brother” – If someone professes to be a Christian, whether we think they are or not, they are held to the standard of a born-again believer.
- “a brother, who is sexually immoral” – He is talking about someone who stubbornly continues in sin. He is not talking about someone who stumbles and then confesses and repents when confronted with the sin.
  - “covetous” – Lit. “one who must have more.”
  - “reviler” – Lit. “one who is a character assassin.”
  - “extortioners” – Lit. “one who steals by violence.”
    - Note the whole list in v. 11. These are people living in open and persistent sin.
  - “to eat with such a person” – That is finding fellowship with a hypocrite.
    - This would apply to family members and friends from other churches too.
- 5:13 – “God judges” – They are already headed to hell. There is nothing worse that can happen to them.
- “put away from yourselves” – We must let God deal with His people.

### **Chapter 6:**

- 6:1 – “a matter against another” – With the pride and divisions within this church, it is no surprise that there are disputes and contentious legal matters as well.
- “before the unrighteous” – The church is airing its dirty laundry before the world.
    - It is okay to go to court if necessary as Paul appealed to Caesar in Acts (Acts 22:25; 25:10-11; Rom. 13:3-4), but not when it deals with a conflict between believers. (v. 8)
  - “the unrighteous” – Unbelievers.
  - “the saints” – Christians.
- 6:2 – “Do you not know” – This question is asked 6 times in this chapter. (v. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19)
- “saints will judge the world” – We will rule and reign with Christ. (Ps. 149:5-9)
  - “will be judged” – Future tense.
    - Presently, God has established human government to maintain peace and we are to submit to their authority in things that pertain to law. (Rom. 13:1-4)
- 6:3 – “judge angels” – Apparently, we will be involved in judging of the fallen angels. (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6)
- 6:4 – “least esteemed by the church” – The newest and youngest believer has more truth by the Holy Spirit than the most educated and powerful of the world.
- 6:5 – “your shame” – Those called to be witnesses of Jesus are confusing their testimony with these disputes.
- “is there not a wise man among you” – This church was proud of its supposed wisdom.
- 6:7 – “rather let yourselves be cheated” – It is better to suffer wrong than to hurt the cause of the kingdom of God.
- What Christ suffered on our behalf was not fair to Him either.
  - When the Body of Christ is divided, who bleeds?
- 6:9-10 – These sins don’t send anyone to hell, but a perpetual practicing of sin in these ways reveals that a person is not truly saved.

- 6:9 – “the kingdom of God” – This is the only judgment that really means anything.
- “deceived” – Many are deceived into thinking that they can live however they want on earth and still get into heaven. (Rom. 1:28-30; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6; Rev. 21:8,27; 22:15)
  - “homosexuals” – Speaking of the male prostitutes that gave themselves to other males. This is the passive act of homosexuality.
  - “sodomites” – Speaking of those who used the male prostitutes. This is the active act of homosexuality.
- 6:11 – “were” – That words implies two things:
1. There is no sin that puts us out of the reach of the grace of God. The church of Corinth was filled with people saved out of all manner of sinful lifestyle.
  2. The grace of God, when accepted in a life, produces a change in behavior as well as a change in destiny.
- 6:12 – “all things are lawful” – We can do what we want. We are not under the Law.
- But just because the law does not forbid me to do something does not mean I should do it.
  - “not helpful” – We should do those things that build people up, not tear them down.
  - “not be brought under the power of any” – One may become enslaved by those actions in which he “freely” indulges.
  - What you do reveals who you are.
- 6:13 – “foods for the stomach” – There are some things that you can do in your body that have no spiritual impact in your life.
- This passage is often used to speak against smoking, but it’s clear that smoking is one of the things you can do with your body that doesn’t impact spirituality.
  - God may give us some personal convictions that supersede the overall teaching of the Scripture for the Body of Christ on the whole.
  - “the body is not for sexual immorality” – There are other things that you cannot do with the body without also leaving a spiritual impact on your life.
  - We have to evaluate decisions based on the Word of God.
- 6:14 – “God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up” – The resurrection proves that God is concerned with our bodies. We are not just spiritual beings.
- God is going to raise us in an incorruptible body.
- 6:16 – “one flesh” – The phrase most used in the Bible to speak of sexual union. Apparently, something more happens in that union than mere biological function.
- 6:17 – “one spirit” – We are spiritually connected and unified with God through the Spirit.
- 6:18 – “flee sexual immorality” – The Biblical solution to overcoming sexual sin is simple: flee. (Gen. 39:12; 2 Tim. 2:22)
- “sexual immorality” – Lit. “any sexual activity outside the context of Biblical marriage.”
- 6:19 – “your body is the temple” – The only thing that makes us different is that we have the Holy Spirit residing within us.
- “temple” – (Greek “naous”) Lit. “the inner sanctuary.”
  - “your” – Singular. He is speaking of each of us individually being the temple of the Holy Spirit.
  - “you are not your own” – The decision is made already.

- 6:20 – “you were bought at a price” – Acts 20:28 says that price was “His own blood.”
- Col. 1:10 calls us to live a life “worthy of the Lord.” If we evaluated our lives through the cross...what would be worthy and what would not be worthy?
  - “glorify God in your body” – God wants to reveal Himself through our bodies.
  - “in your body and in your spirit” – All of it belongs to God.

### **Chapter 7:**

- 7:1 – “not to touch a woman” – They are advocating for celibacy.
- This seems to be an overreaction of the church to the Corinthian culture.
  - Marriage and sex in marriage were created by God and came into being before the fall.
  - “good” – Paul is clear that singleness is good. (v. 8)
- 7:2 – “man have his own wife” – God’s definition of marriage is one man and one woman for life. (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-5)
- 7:3 – “the affection due her” – Every wife of a Christian man is due affection, no matter her age or physical condition.
- Married people should not live like single people, and single people should not live like married people.
- 7:4 – “The wife does not have authority over her own body” – A wife’s body is no longer her own.
- Wives, ask your husbands what he would like to do with his (your) body.
  - Understand a few things:
    1. Sex is not always the icing on the cake (despite what the romance novels and soap operas say), sometimes it is the initiator to intimacy. Marital glue.
    2. There is more to sex than a romantic and emotional experience. There is a physical need that needs to be provided for too.
    3. Sexual intimacy can make his spiritual walk easier and better.
  - “the husband does not have authority over his own body” – A husband’s body is not his own.
    - Husbands, ask your wives what she would like to do with her (your) body.
    - Understand a few things:
      1. What you want from your wife’s body may be very different from what your wife wants from your body. The responsibility is for you to give first. Sex starts in the kitchen.
      2. Many wives carry unnecessary burdens and are tired. Some men expect too much and then wonder why she doesn’t have anything to give to them.
      3. Relationship is more important than your needs or her needs alone. “We” is more important than her or him. Sometimes men get lazy and just let their wives do what they want so they can have some peace.
- 7:5 – “do not deprive one another” – Sexual intimacy is to be a regular part of married life.
- It is not necessarily more spiritual to be celibate. And within marriage, celibacy is typically less spiritual.
  - “fasting” – This defines the length of the consensual deprivation.
  - “so that Satan does not tempt you” – Inconsistent or negligent sexual intimacy within marriage gives an open door for the evil one to destroy the marriage.
    - Sex is not to be used for manipulation. It is a tool within marriage to keep the relationship close, not a weapon for one to use against the other.

- 7:8 – “it is good for them to remain even as I am” – Celibacy is a gift and calling of God given to some. (Matt. 19:11-12)
- 7:10 – “A wife is not to depart from her husband” – In Corinthian culture, a wife was permitted to divorce her husband.
- “For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce.” (Mal. 2:16)
  - “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matt. 19:6)
- 7:11 – “if she does depart” – It may be necessary for a wife to separate from a husband for reasons that do not merit a divorce. For instance, if a wife is being abused by the husband, it is wise for her to separate from him. But if a divorce ensues, she does not have the Biblical right to remarry.
- “remain unmarried” – The only times remarriage is Biblically permissible is when the spouse dies (v. 39), there is a divorce due to sexual immorality (Matt. 19:9), or if the unbelieving spouse divorces a believing spouse (v. 15).
- 7:12 – “a wife who does not believe” – This refers to people who got married while both were unsaved, but one got saved after they were married.
- 7:13 – “he is willing to live with her” – He is okay with her and her faith.
- A believing spouse is not expected to submit and surrender their faith to the unbelieving spouse. “We ought to obey God rather than man” – Acts 5:29.
- 7:14 – “sanctified” – Not saved, but literally “set apart.”
- The believer ministers to the unbeliever with their lifestyle and not just their words. We make bad Holy Spirits...let Him do the work of conviction. (1 Pet. 3:1-6)
  - “unclean” – (Greek “akathartos”) The word carries the idea of illegitimate.
- 7:15 – “not under bondage in such cases” – It seems to imply that the believing spouse is free to remarry if the unbelieving spouse divorces the believing spouse.
- 7:18 – “become uncircumcised” – There was actually a medical procedure to stretch the foreskin and reverse the circumcision. This was especially important for Jews working among Gentiles in social or economic situations where business was conducted in gyms and bathhouses.
- 7:19 – “keeping the commandments of God is what matters” – Walking with the Lord in relationship and fellowship is more important than being married or single.
- 7:20 – “remain in the same calling” – Coming to Christ is not adopting a Christian lifestyle.
- The situations and circumstances of our lives are not as important as the relationship with God Himself that defines our life.
  - This is assuming that the calling in which we were called is not an inherently sinful lifestyle.
- 7:21 – “slave” – Along with marriage, these are the two specific examples Paul uses to speak about these principles of contentment and service.
- “if you can be made free, rather use it” – If you are granted freedom, use it to serve the Lord.
  - There is nothing wrong with seeking to improve the condition of your life, but be content at every stage.

- 7:24 – “remain with God” – This relationship is the source of all contentment.
- “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim. 6:6)
  - A discontented person with a good spouse or a good job will still be discontented.
- 7:25 – “virgins” – These are unmarried persons.
- Paul assumes that an unmarried person is a virgin...as it should be.
- 7:26 – “present distress” – Persecution is coming to the Church in the Roman Empire.
- An especially challenging form of persecution comes when our families are attacked.
- 7:27 – “Do not seek a wife” – Avoid spouse hunting.
- How does Christian Mingle justify its existence in light of this verse?
- 7:28 – “trouble in the flesh” – Getting married and having children greatly increases the complexity of serving the Lord.
- 7:29 – “the time is short” – Paul lives in light of eternity. (Matt. 24:44)
- “as though they had none” – Fulfilling the purpose of God for our lives is more important than seeking short-term comfort and happiness.
  - The situations we place ourselves in should help us to fulfill our ministry and not hinder us in what God has designed us to do.
  - If a married couple cannot do more in service to the Lord together than they could do separate, then they should stay single.
- 7:31 – “use this world as not misusing it” – Paul is not advocating for the neglect of family relationships and responsibilities (v. 3-5). However, a family should not so consume a person’s time and energy that they cannot also pursue service outside of the home. Family is an arena in which we serve God, not an idol to consume our service upon itself.
- “is passing away” – The world is currently in the process of passing away. (Luke 12:31)
- 7:33 – “cares” – Lit. “pulled in many different directions.” (Matt. 13:22)
- A husband must learn how to properly balance his own relationship with the Lord, his work, his ministry, and his relationships with his family.
- 7:35 – “serve the Lord without distraction” – This is the overriding theme of this section.
- “distraction” – As Martha was “distracted with much serving” in Luke 10:40.
- 7:36 – “his virgin” – In that culture the marriages were pre-arranged. A decision by one partner to remain single would have a great effect on the other.
- 7:37 – “keep his virgin” – It is okay to give their child to be married or not to give them to be married, depending on their conviction.
- 7:39 – “only in the Lord” – This doesn’t just mean that both are to be believers, but the Greek implies that it is “only according to God’s will.”
- Marrying someone who is professing to believe in Jesus is not enough for confidence that it will be a good marriage. Marry someone sold out to Jesus.
  - “There aren’t many options,” you’ll hear people say. But you only need one.

## Chapter 8:

- 8:1 – “things offered to idols” – They would sacrifice an animal to an idol in a local shrine and then sell the remaining meat in stores called shambles. (Acts 15:29)
- “edifies” – Lit. “builds up.”
  - “knowledge puffs up, but love edifies” – The greatest mark of spiritual growth is not the attaining of more information, but a growing in greater love. (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:1)
- 8:2 – “think he knows anything” – Those aware that idols are nothing and are willing to eat meat sacrificed to idols.
- 8:3 – “known by God” – What is important is not what we claim to know, but whether or not He would claim to know us.
- 8:4 – “an idol is nothing” – Being the work of man’s hands, they really aren’t anything at all.
- “no other God” – He is not saying that there aren’t such things as demons and a devil (1 Cor. 10:20). But they are not rival gods in any way, but rather fallen created beings.
- 8:6 – “one God” – There is only one God.
- “of whom are all things” – God is the ultimate source of all creation. (Acts 4:24; Heb. 2:10)
- 8:7 – “there is not in everyone that knowledge” – Not all believers have that freedom.
- Paul is not trying to talk anyone out of their convictions.
  - Examples include, alcohol, beach, movies, TV, Disney, Busch Gardens, etc.
  - “with consciousness of the idol” – Those that have been saved out of a lifestyle of idol worship would have a hard time separating the meat from the idol worship.
  - “conscience” – means “to know with.” Conscience is that internal court where actions are judged and either approved or condemned, but conscience can be informed and changed. (Rom. 2:14-15)
  - “being weak” – Having many religious rules is a sign of spiritual weakness.
    - Spiritual maturity leads us into a Godly freedom.
- 8:9 – “stumbling block to those who are weak” – Paul is not talking about catering to legalists, but in caring for the sincere brother who might stumble by our freedom.
- In Rom. 14:22, Paul says that if you have faith that allows for freedom in your life, then we should “have it to yourself before God.” But these freedoms should be limited to a private setting and should not be seen by those who could be stumbled by it.
- 8:11 – “perish” – His faith and walk would be ruined.
- 8:12 – “you sin against Christ” – To sin against fellow believers is to sin against Jesus Himself.
- “sin” – This is the only use of the word “sin” in 1 Cor. 8, and it refers to the one who stumbles another believer.
    - You can use your freedom in a way that would be sin.
- 8:13 – “never again eat meat” – What is more important, your freedom or your brother?
- Paul knows the value of even one other Christian. They were purchased with the blood of Christ. (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23)
  - “People who have principles don’t need rules” – Chuck Smith.

## **Chapter 9:**

- 9:1 – “Have I not seen Jesus Christ” – This is one of the qualifications for apostleship. (Acts 1:22)
- In the more narrow definition of “apostle,” there will only ever be 12 of them. There are foundation stones in heaven with their names on them.
- 9:2 – “seal of my apostleship” – A seal was a sign of ownership.
- 9:3 – “defense...examine” – Both are legal terms taken from the courtroom.
- 9:4-6 – “right” – Paul is using himself as an example to the Corinthians believers of what it looks like to have a right that you are willing to relinquish for your service and testimony of Christ.
- “eat and drink” – Rations.
    - Itinerant speakers would often be given a meal and a love offering from the agape feast during the Sunday evening church gatherings.
  - “a believing wife” – Relationships.
    - It was permissible to marry and travel with a wife, as long as she was a believer.
    - Even Peter was married and apparently traveled with his wife. (Mark 1:30)
  - “working” – Remunerations.
- 9:9 – “not muzzle the ox” – The laborer is worthy of his wages. (Deut. 25:4; 1 Tim. 5:17-18)
- If God requires this payment from people to support their ministers, how much more will God Himself make sure that His ministers are taken care of? God takes care of His workers.
  - “Is it oxen God is concerned about?” – This isn’t just for oxen. They cannot read.
- 9:12 – “we have not used this right” – It is a right to receive. It is not something to demand and take.
- Paul says it is ok to receive support; he does not say it is ok to ask for it.
- 9:14 – “those who preach from the gospel should live from the gospel” – The general rule is that ministers should be supported by their ministries. (Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7-8; 1 Tim. 5:17)
- 9:15 – “I have used none of these things” – Paul lived in Corinth off the support of other churches. (2 Cor. 11:8)
- “make my boasting void” – Paul didn’t want anything to damage his testimony of the Gospel.
- 9:16 – “necessity is laid upon me” – It is not a choice; it is a calling.
- 9:18 – “abuse my authority” – It is an abuse of authority for a minister to selfishly gain off the backs of those he/she is supposedly ministering to. (Matt. 7:15)
- 9:19 – “that I might win the more” – The whole point of chapters 8-9 is to sacrifice one’s personal rights to win people to faith in Jesus Christ.
- 9:20 – “as under the law” – Paul didn’t return to his Jewish lifestyle. But rather, he lived as if he were under the law so that he didn’t offend the Jews he wanted to share Jesus with.

9:21 – “as without law” – Paul does not say that he transgresses the law, but rather he lives “as without” it. That is, he can live as a Gentile that would not follow the law, but his conscience. This would keep him from feeling obligated to follow the Jewish ceremonial law and customs, but would not allow him to voluntarily break the Ten Commandments.

- This would in no way involve a compromise with sin.

9:23 – “for the gospel’s sake” – Paul’s primary concern is not the people, but the gospel.

- When Paul’s method and approach changed, his message did not. The Gospel was the reason for everything else he did.
- “Paul sought to win people to Jesus Christ by being sensitive to their needs and identifying with them. We should try to reach people where they are today and expect to see changes later.” (Chuck Smith)

9:24 – “receive the prize” – Future rewards in Corinthians: 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9-10.

- Great athletes are consistently sacrificing some temporary freedom of the present for the more permanent reward of the future.
- “that you may obtain it” – Paul tells us to train and compete as athletes who really want to win. Without effort, nothing can be won in a sporting event.
- It is possible for all Christians to win this race. We are not competing against each other, but against ourselves in an attempt to be faithful to God’s call on our individual lives.
- It may be true that not all (and maybe not even most) believers are obtaining.

9:25 – “competes” – A wrestling term.

- “temperate” – The idea is “self-disciplined.”
- “imperishable crown” – (Greek “stephanos”) Lit. “the victor’s laurel wreath.”
  - The “stephanos” is also mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11; 4:10.
  - The crowns are given to us so that we have something to cast at His feet in heaven.

9:26 – “I run thus... Thus I fight” – There is a path and there is an opponent. Therefore we run and fight accordingly.

9:27 – “discipline” – Lit. “to punch in the eye; to give a black eye.”

- With great power and privilege come great responsibility and need for discipline.
- “body” – As a believer, the spirit needs to control and lead the body.
- “bring it into subjection” – Lit. “lead about as a slave.”
- “disqualified” – (Greek “adokomos”) A technical term regarding being disqualified from the games. Once disqualified, there was no chance of winning and no opportunity to receive a laurel wreath.
  - Believers have great freedom, but can be disqualified for misusing that freedom. This disqualification is not a loss of salvation, but a loss of ministry and reward.
  - The loss of any blessing we could enjoy in heaven is an eternal loss.

## Chapter 10:

10:1-10 – Paul now lists the OT examples of some who were disqualified.

10:1 – “unaware” – This is information they knew, but implications they may have missed.

- “all” – 5 times in vv. 1-4.
  - The 5 benefits of vv. 1-4 correspond to the 5 disqualifying sins of vv. 6-10.
- “under the cloud” – This was God’s presence and protection.
- “all passed through the sea” – These are saved people who never walk in the fullness of what God has for them.
  - As believers, we have a wilderness and we have a promised land. Where we choose to live depends on how we run the race and discipline our bodies.

10:2 – “baptized” – The idea is placed under Moses’ leadership as a result of the miraculous deliverance.

10:3 – “spiritual food” – That is the manna.

10:4 – “spiritual drink” – That is the physical water provided supernaturally.

- “that spiritual Rock that followed them” – The cloud led them and the Rock followed them.

10:5 – “with most of them God was not well pleased” – All but 2 of the 603,550 men of Israel who passed through the Red Sea died in the wilderness.

- “well pleased” – “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6)
  - “In spite of this they still sinned, and did not believe in His wondrous works. Therefore their days He consumed in futility, and their years in fear...And limited the Holy One of Israel.” (Ps. 78:32-33, 41)
- “scattered” – God was merciful not to kill them all off at the same time.

10:6 – “as they also lusted” – From Numbers 11. They lusted after quail, despite having the manna. God gave them quail, but it killed them.

- “But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” (Ps. 106:14-15)
- “lust” – Lit. “desire.” This is not merely sexual lust, but it can be a desire for anything.
  - Desire is what generally drives a human life. It is the heart that makes a convert of the mind.
  - “Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” (James 1:15)
- “evil things” – This is anything outside of God’s word and the prescribed will of God. In the case of the ancient Israelites, it was food and water that led to some of the greatest judgments.

10:7 – “idolaters” – From Exodus 32. Aaron made the golden calf and called it “Yahweh.” 3,000 men of Israel died that day.

- They chose something tangible and lesser over something they could not see but was in fact more real.
- We may not worship before little statues, but the gods of the OT are still the same today. Baal – fertility and prosperity. Mammon – money. Ashteroth – sex. Molech – abortions.

- 10:8 – “commit sexual immorality” – From Numbers 25. It was a plot of Balaam and Balak, king of Moab, to sexually seduce Israel away from God.
- Num. 25:9 says 24,000 died. Paul tells us 23,000 of them died in “one day.”
  - “sexual immorality” – or “fornication.” Lit. “any sexual acts outside of the context of Biblical marriage.”
- 10:9 – “tempt Christ” – From Numbers 21. The people complained about their God-given provision. They said there was no food and water and they hated the manna. Therefore, God sent fiery serpents into the camp and “many” died.
- 10:10 – “complained” – From Numbers 11:1. We are not told what they complained of, but God killed those on the outskirts of the camp with fire.
- “the destroyer” – This seems to be God Himself.
- 10:11 – “written for our admonition” – Read and study to know all of the Scriptures.
- “the ends of the ages” – The Scriptures are written especially for those nearing the end of the age.
- 10:12 – “thinks he stands” – Some don’t think that 1 Cor. 10:1-11 applies to them. They are the ones being prepared for a fall.
- “take heed” – This is the only exhortation between standing and falling.
- 10:13 – “common to man” – We haven’t dealt with anything that others haven’t also dealt with. We are not alone or special in our particular situation or struggle.
- It is a deception to think that our circumstances are different and merit different rules or considerations from what the Scriptures have already laid out.
  - “tempted beyond” – God will not allow us to be in a situation where we must sin. Doing the right thing is always an option. (James 1:13-14)
  - “that you may be able to bear it” – The Greek is literally, “the way of escape is that we may be able to bear it.” The way of escape is not to take us out of the temptation (although that may happen sometimes), but to give us strength to resist to the end.
    - Despite all the people we have seen fall and be disqualified, we know that it is still possible for us to walk in a way that we do not fall ourselves. It is not necessary to sin.
    - The work of God is to change our nature, not just our circumstances. (2 Pet. 1:4)
- 10:14 – “flee from idolatry” – Our liberty (v. 23) doesn’t give us freedom to worship idols.
- As a part of Christian liberty, we now have the freedom not to sin.
- 10:15 – “as to wise men” – The Corinthians prided themselves in being wise.
- 10:16 – “communion” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “fellowship.”
- Communion is a physical picture of the spiritual reality of partaking in Christ. Jesus said in John 6 that we are to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood.

- 10:17 – “we...are one bread and one body” – Our communion with God connects us with one another in the body of Christ.
- “...truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)
  - Fellowship among the believers is natural and normal for those growing in Christ. Fellowship is not something we create. It is something we allow.
- 10:18 – “partakers” – (Greek “koinonos”) Masculine noun of “koinonia.” Also in v. 20.
- “partakers of the altar” – The peace offerings of the OT were fellowship offerings where God and the worshipper both partook of the same offering.
  - In the Jewish mind, you become one with the person you eat a meal with.
- 10:20 – “fellowship” – (Greek “koinonia”) Paul is establishing a firm contrast of fellowship. (v. 16)
- “demons” – The idols are not representations of other gods (1 Cor. 8:4-5), but there are demons influencing the worship of idols and the desire for other gods.
  - Sacrificing to idols is a perversion of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- 10:21 – “cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons” – You cannot serve two masters. It is a matter of who you are finding fellowship with.
- If eating the meat would be an act of devotion or fellowship with the idol, then you should abstain from eating.
- 10:23 – “not all things edify” – Just because something is permitted does not mean that it is beneficial.
- The freedom we have in Christ is the freedom to know and experience God sincerely, personally, and openly. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
- 10:25 – “asking no questions” – If you don’t know if that meat was sacrificed to an idol, then you won’t associate that meat with the demon behind the idol and it will eliminate your chance of finding fellowship with evil in that meal.
- 10:28 – “This was offered to idols” – If someone is making a big deal about the meat being offered to idols, pass on the meat.
- 10:29 – “but that of the other” – The greater law at play is the law of love for others.
- Spirituality is not measured in the freedoms you experience, but in the love you demonstrate to others.
- 10:31 – “do all to the glory of God” – This is to be the motivation to everything we do.
- Not everything can be done to the glory of God. We see the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6) To do all to His glory is to be seeking fellowship with Him in all things.
- 10:32 – “Jews...Greeks...church of God” – These are the categories in which God sees the world.
- This verse is evidence against Replacement Theology.
- 10:33 – “that they may be saved” – It is not always convenient to witness of Jesus. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)
- That consideration affected all of Paul’s life...even what and how he ate.

## Chapter 11:

- 11:1 – “Imitate me” – Paul was passionately pursuing the knowledge of Jesus. So if we imitate Paul, we too will be getting to know Jesus better.
- “just as I also imitate Christ” – We can imitate others only as we see them follow and reflect Christ. No person (other than Jesus) is worthy of our entire devotion.
    - The context of 1 Corinthians 11:1 is Paul giving up his rights for the benefit of the gospel and the rest of the Church. Paul is asking the Corinthians to follow him in submission to the order of the Church under God. Then Paul goes on to explain the order of society as God has prescribed, especially that of the family. (Key verse: 11:3.)
    - There are three options for interpreting this passage:
      1. Women wearing physical head coverings while in the church gathering;
      2. Corinthian women wearing veils to keep from looking like prostitutes;
      3. Establishing the spiritual order in of the home.
- 11:2 – “I praise you” – Paul is gracious to this church with many errors.
- 11:3 – “the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man” – God has established an order. God’s kingdom is not run as a democracy.
- This order isn’t a democracy and it’s not a dictatorship; it’s a theocracy.
  - “the head of every man is Christ” – We are all in submission to someone else.
    - Eph. 5:22, “wives, submit to your own husbands,” is preceded in v. 21 with “submitting to one another in the fear of God.” And the established order of marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:32)
    - One of the main problems in the church is the lack of male headship/leadership. (It is a stronghold of the enemy in the church of central PA.) Chuck Swindoll links the role-reversal of married couples, where males become passive and women become the leader of their household, to committing sexual sin before marriage. This one sin creates trust issues in the woman which cause her to reach for more control than is rightfully due her. It also creates guilt in the husband which renders him spiritually impotent.
    - Submission is not suppression, but a willingly coming under.
  - “the head of Christ is God” – Submission does not determine value, but order. Jesus submitted to God, but was equal value with God. (John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; Phil. 2:6-7)
  - “head” – The concept of headship carries the idea of covering/protection and authority/leadership. (Eph. 1:21-22; 5:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:10.)
- 11:4 – “having his head covered” – In modern Judaism, men all pray and enter synagogue with their heads covered.
- 11:5 – “every woman who prays or prophesies” – Women were/are allowed to pray and prophesy in a church setting. (1 Cor. 14:34)
- “her head uncovered” – This is not talking about a woman wearing a hat or head covering. She is to remain in submission to her husband, even while ministering or sharing in a public church setting.
    - “I do not permit a woman to teach (Greek “didasko”) or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.” (1 Tim. 2:12)
    - Both man and woman do what they do because of who their heads are.

- 11:7 – “man indeed ought not to cover his head” – This is not speaking about praying or worshipping with a hat on. It means we are to be sure not to have any authority stand between us and our head, who is Christ.
- “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5)
- 11:8 – “man is not from woman” – This is referring to the original creation. Adam was made from the dust; Eve was formed from Adam’s side.
- Even before the fall, God honored the order and differences between a men and women.
  - God defines sex and gender as male and female. A culture that at one point worked to convince us that the roles between men and women needed to be blurred, is now working to convince us that there need to be no definitive lines between the identity of men and women.
- 11:9 – “but woman for the man” – Eve was created as a “helper comparable” to serve and complete Adam. (Gen. 2:18)
- 11:10 – “authority” – (Greek “exousia”) Lit. “power of one’s own choosing.”
- “head” – (Greek “kephale”) Lit. “physical head, or metaphorical chief.”
  - “authority on her head, because of the angels” – There is a spiritual aspect to headship and involves covering and authority. (1 Cor. 4:9)
    - Husbands have the spiritual responsibility of providing a covering and authority for their wives. Wives are protected by remaining under the God-given order...like an umbrella.
    - Husband, your wife will follow you anywhere if she knows that God is leading you.
- 11:12 – “man also comes through woman” – This is referring to childbirth.
- A man’s authority over a woman is never to treat her as if she is insignificant or unnecessary. If it wasn’t for a woman, no man would be alive.
  - “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.” (William Ross Wallace)
  - Men have influence through leadership; women lead through influence.
- 11:14 – “nature itself” – Paul uses physical hair as a picture of the spiritual work of headship.
- There are no universal rules, but the general principle across cultures is that women tend to wear their hair longer than do men.
  - “dishonor” – It does not say that it is a sin.
- 11:15 – “hair is given to her for a covering” – This could also be translated “hair is given to her instead of a covering.”
- 11:16 – “no such custom” – Paul seems to refer now to the physical picture of the hair as it applies to the church in Corinth.
- In Corinth, there were over 1,000 temple prostitutes to Aphrodite. They were recognized by short hair and no wearing veils. It may be that this instruction to wear head coverings was highly influenced by the current situation in Corinth and unnecessary to be practiced in other church settings.
- 11:18 – “divisions” – (Greek “schisma”) Lit. “tears, schisms, or divisions.” (1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:3)

- 11:19 – “factions” – (Greek “hairesis”) Lit. “sect, or heresy.”
- Nearly every division is accompanied by some doctrine. Often it is one verse or passage, proof-texted and blown out of proportion from the rest of Scripture.
- 11:20 – “it is not to eat the Lord’s Supper” – These other issues are preventing the Lord’s Supper from being what God intended it to be.
- 11:21 – “takes his own supper ahead of others” – The early church gatherings often had an agape/fellowship meal, followed by teaching and prayer, and concluded by receiving the Lord’s Supper. It seems that some were getting there early and eating their meal before others got there.
- It was typically the slaves and poor people (“those who have nothing” – v. 22) who got there last as they would be finishing up their duties before being released to fellowship with the church.
  - By the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the church determined by a Council that the Lord’s Supper should no longer be associated with the Love Feasts because these issues could not be resolved. (mentioned in Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown commentary)
- 11:22 – “shame those who have nothing” – They are hurting the poor and the slaves.
- 11:23 – “I received from the Lord” – Paul was not at the Last Supper with the twelve. Jesus must have come to him later to give him these instructions.
- All ministry should simply be a distribution to others of that which the Lord has given us.
  - “the Lord Jesus” – The center of the gathered Church is supposed to be the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - A Church centered on Christ will minimize division and grow in fellowship.
  - But that necessarily means that we are not the center of the Church gathered; Jesus is. We are not here to get our needs met or meet others’ needs. We are here to bless and learn of Him. Our needs will be met as a natural by-product.
- 11:24 – “thanks” – Jesus is thanking God for the sacrifice He is about to perform. This is selfless love.
- The Greek word for thanks is where we get the word “Eucharist” from.
  - “broken” – The idea is “broken open, or broken in pieces.”
  - “in remembrance of me” – The first and primary purpose of Communion.
  - The primary thing Jesus wants us to remember about Him is his death on the cross.
- 11:26 – “proclaim” – (Greek “kerusso”) Lit. “proclaim, preach, declare.”
- Communion needs no words to preach.
  - “till He comes” – Communion has a future aspect to it...expecting the near return of Christ.
  - Looking to the return of Christ speaks to the fact of His resurrection from the dead. Communion points to His death, but He didn’t remain dead.
  - Jesus gave His body and blood to purchase a bride He is eager to take to Himself.
- 11:27 – “in an unworthy manner” – He doesn’t say we must be worthy to take Communion. None of us is worthy (Rev. 5:4). He is talking about the manner in which we take Communion.
- 11:28 – “examine himself” – Communion need not be externally policed.

- 11:29 – “drinks judgment to himself” – This is not speaking of an unbeliever who takes Communion. The context here is clearly regarding believers.
- “judgment” – This is not speaking of hell or eternal condemnation, but of present discipline.
  - “not discerning the Lord’s body” – This defines the unworthy manner and entails two things; 1. the Lord Jesus’ body typified by the bread and cup, and 2. the Church as the Body of Christ.
    - The Corinthian church was being disciplined by the Lord because they were not willing to “wait for one another” (v. 33) and partake in Communion as equal members of the Body of Christ.
    - The selfless love of Christ for us remembered in Communion is to rub off on His believers.
    - The 4 purposes of Communion: 1. look back (v.24-25), 2. look forward (v. 26), 3. look in (v. 28), and 4. look around (v. 29).
- 11:30 – “many sleep” – Some in the church have died because of failure in connection with Communion.
- 11:32 – “chastened by the Lord” – God disciplines the sons and daughters He loves. (Heb. 12:5-7)
- 11:34 – “the rest I will set in order” – Apparently there is more to set in order.

## **Chapter 12:**

- 12:1 – “spiritual gifts” – Lit. “spiritualities.” This is not talking of gifts specifically. Paul is detailing the spiritual qualities and diversities of the church, which includes but is not limited to gifts.
- Jesus said, in reference to the Holy Spirit, that God gives “good gifts.” (Luke 11:13) If one is submitted to God and sincerely seeking the fullness of the Spirit, the Father will not allow that desire to be a portal of the devil to invade the life of His child.
  - “ignorant” – Lit. “to not know.” There are very few things the Church is less ignorant of (as well as scared of and antagonistic over) as the gifts of the Spirit.
    - The Corinthian Christians thought they were experts in the area of the Holy Spirit because they experienced so many of His gifts. (1 Cor. 1:4-7; 3:1-3)
- 12:2 – “dumb” – The idols cannot speak or communicate, in contrast to the Spirit of God.
- “you were led” – Lit. “led away helplessly.”
- 12:3 – “Jesus accursed” – Using Christ’s name in vain, either disparagingly or falsely.
- “Jesus is Lord” – This is speaking about the deity of Jesus Christ.
    - The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify and represent Jesus Christ. Jesus said that “[the Holy Spirit] will testify of Me” (John 15:26) and “He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14). In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, that they would “be witnesses to Me.”
  - “no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” – The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the unifying fact of the Church. He is what we have in common.
    - The gifts, on the other hand, are not common to all Christians. (v. 4-5)
- 12:4-6 – “diversities...differences...diversities” – The same Greek word.
- The Holy Spirit will not manifest Himself the same way in every person.
  - The Trinity is subtly mentioned in these 3 verses.
- 12:4 – “gifts” – (Greek “charisma”) Lit. “grace-gifts.”

12:5 – “ministries” – (Greek “diakonia”) Lit. “services.”

- Essentially, a ministry is not an organization, but a service to God’s people for God’s glory. The body of Christ is to function more organically than institutionally.

12:6 – “activities” – (Greek “energemata”) Lit. “energy.” This word is translated “miracles” in v. 10.

12:7 – “manifestation of the Spirit” – These are the sign-gifts.

- The Bible lists service-gifts in Rom. 12:4-8 and position-gifts in Eph. 4:7-11.
- “the manifestation” – Lit. “the holding forth.” The gift is that which comes from the Spirit, through a person, and can be seen by other people.
  - The sign-gifts differ from the other gifts in that the manifestation itself is the gift. The sign-gifts aren’t given to us to wield how we would choose, but they come through us as He chooses when we yield to Him. Properly, there are no “healers.” There are just people God has used to do healings through.
- “to each one” – Every believer has a gift of the Spirit.
  - Very often, the person who is being used by the Holy Spirit to deliver the gift is unaware that it is even happening. They are simply abiding in the vine, being filled by the Holy Spirit, and moving in what they believe to be right. It is the people for whom the gift is meant to edify that most rightly perceive the gift.
- “for the profit of all” – The sign-gifts are not for the promotion of one, but for the benefit of all.
  - Speaking in tongues is the only gift for personal edification.

12:8 – “to one...to another” – No one person has all of the gifts.

- “word of wisdom” – “Knowledge applied” to a particular situation to accomplish God’s purposes.
- “word of knowledge” – Information supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit.

12:9 – “faith” – The ability to trust God to do what only God can do until He does it.

- “gifts of healings” – A bodily healing that verifies the Word and emboldens the Church.

12:10 – “working of miracles” – Lit. “the operation of powers.” The ability to do the supernatural.

- “prophecy” – Lit. “speaking forth.” For edification, exhortation, and comfort. (1 Cor. 14:3)
  - This gift implies more than merely good preaching.
- “discerning of spirits” – Clarity to know what is of God, what is of Satan, and what is of the flesh. It is a God-given knowledge of source or motivation. (1 John 4:1)
- “tongues” – Lit. “an utterance in an unknown language or dialect.”
- “interpretation of tongues” – Translation of a gift of tongues into the common language.

12:11 – “as He wills” – These gifts are distributed according to the wisdom of God.

- The Holy Spirit is spoken of as “He,” not “it.” The Holy Spirit is a personality.

12:12 – “the body” – Paul’s most common metaphor for the Church.

- Paul only refers to the Church as a family one time. (1 Tim. 3:15)
- The Church universal is the actual Church; the church local is the practical church.
- “members” – The idea is body parts. This is not a text for membership as in a club.
- “so also is Christ” – Jesus Christ, and no human man or woman, is the head of the Church.

12:13 – “one Spirit...one body...one Spirit” – The essential characteristic of a Spirit-filled church is unity in Christ. (Eph. 4:3)

- 12:14 – “not one member but many” – Unity in the Church is not uniformity. We are not all the same, nor are we supposed to be. Christ is most clearly seen in the whole when each part contributes its unique share. (Eph. 4:16)
- My job is not to be the Church, but to be part of the Church.
- 12:18 – “God set” – God places the gifts in the Church for the benefit of the Church.
- “as He pleased” – This is not for us, it is for His pleasure. (Rev. 4:11)
- 12:21 – “the eye cannot say” – The eye cannot say anything, it doesn’t have a mouth.
- “no need of you” – The arrogance of the isolated Christian damages the witness of the whole.
    - At some point in our lives, we are going to seriously need the body of Christ to surround us and care for us and God’s calling in our lives.
- 12:22 – “seem to be weaker” – They seem to be weaker, because they work unseen.
- The most important parts of the body are the ones that are not seen...heart, kidneys, etc. These are the parts that are to be most valued and protected.
  - How does one esteem their heart or kidneys? Eat right, exercise, and rest.
- 12:23 – “bestow” – Lit. “clothe.”
- 12:24 – “presentable parts have no need” – Persons with more public and recognizable gifts do not need to be given special honor.
- “God composed the body” – He builds the church.
- 12:25 – “care for one another” – or “thoughts concerning one another.”
- Genuine care for one another is the environment in which the gifts work best.
- 12:26 – “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it” – The failure of one part of the body makes the entire body less efficient.
- If you hit your thumb with a hammer, the thumb isn’t the only member that suffers.
  - Romans 12:15 speaks of the empathy we have for one another in the Body of Christ.
- 12:28 – “apostles” – Lit. “sent out ones.”
- There are only 12 apostles that serve as the foundation of the Church, but there have been innumerable apostles since the first generation of the Church that have taken the message of Jesus Christ to new and unreached peoples.
  - Paul moves from the position gifts in the church to the service and sign gifts.
- 12:29 – “Are all apostles?” – The author assumes a “no” answer to all these questions.
- 12:31 – “earnestly desire” – We contribute to this process by seeing a need in the life of a church body and then eagerly desiring God to meet that need through us or another person.
- “the best gifts” – The best gifts are the ones needed in a particular life for a particular church body to do a particular work.

An important point regarding the use of spiritual gifts in the dispensation of the Church: 1 Cor. 13 is often used as a proof-text to dispel the use and need for spiritual gifts past the first generation of the Church. 1 Cor. 13:8-12 teaches that the gifts are temporary and are given to the body of Christ to cause the body to do the work the body was left on earth to do until the return of Christ. But the gifts will cease to be used “when that which is perfect has come” (1 Cor. 13:10). Some claim that this perfection is the canonization of the Scriptures, but the context doesn’t allow it. 1 Cor. 13:12 defines the perfect as when we see Jesus. This passage doesn’t annul the gifts, but balances them with the grace of love. Love doesn’t mean we stop doing things, but we do them the right way.

### **Chapter 13:**

13:1-3 – Duty without love is meaningless.

- Duty without love is empty, but there is no love without duty. For example: A husband with flowers, but without love compared with a husband with love, but lazy. Both would be unacceptable to a caring wife.
- Paul is encouraging the Corinthians believers to use their gifts in love.

13:1 – “tongues of men and of angels” – Spiritual experience.

- “love” – (Greek “agape”) Lit. “a self-sacrificing, unconditional decision to love.” (Gal. 5:20; 1 John 4:8,16)
- The Greeks had different words for love: “phileo” – friendship love, “storge” – family love, “eros” – sexual love, and “agape” – unconditional love.
- “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13)
- “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

13:2 – “prophecy...understand all mysteries...all faith” – Spiritual power.

- “faith, so that I could remove mountains” – As Jesus spoke of in Matt. 17:20.

13:3 – “goods to feed the poor...my body to be burned” – Spiritual sacrifice.

- Even Buddhist monks can give their bodies to be burned.

13:4-8 – Agape love is foreign to us. We need God to define it for us.

- True love is defined by the action that accompanies it and not by a feeling we may or may not experience.
- When all we do is permeated by love, it makes what we do meaningful.

13:4 – “suffers long” – NIV translates this “patient.” Lit. “to bear long, or endure.”

- “kind” – Lit. “working to the best interest of another.”
  - These two together immediately makes this humanly impossible.
  - The first two characteristics define what love is. The remaining characteristics define what love is not.
- “envy” – Lit. “selfish desire or lust for something someone else has.”
  - Envy reveals itself when someone else is preferred before ourselves.
  - Rather than wanting the good things another has, we should celebrate with them over those good things.
- “parade itself” – Lit. “putting oneself on display.”
  - True love doesn’t mind being anonymous.
- “puffed up” – Lit. “proud.” We would call this person a “windbag.”
  - Envy, parading itself, and puffed up all deal with a desire to be seen, known, recognized, honored, or esteemed for the good we think we are doing.

13:5 – “rudely” – Lit. “unbecomingly, or weird.”

- We can be supernaturally natural. We don’t have to be supernaturally weird.
- Love doesn’t need to be seen or make a spectacle of itself.
- “does not seek its own” – Lit. “does not work for her/her own rights or desires.”
- “provoked” – Lit. “irritated, provoked, aroused to anger.” We would say “fired up.”
  - It is not loving to be temperamental, thin-skinned, easily offended, or quick to be resentful.
- “thinks no evil” – Lit. “account, assume, presuppose something as evil.”
  - This carries the idea of “keeps no record of wrongs.”

13:6 – “iniquity” – Lit. “injustice or unrighteousness in ourselves or others.”

- “rejoices in the truth” – Lit. “honors sincere, right, and good actions.”

13:7 – “bears” – Lit. “covers.”

- “Love will cover a multitude of sins.” (1 Pet. 4:8)
- “believes” – Lit. “trusts.”
  - Love assumes the best about others.
- “hopes” – Lit. “waits with expectancy.”
- “endures” – Lit. “bears up under, perseveres.”

13:8 – “fails” – Lit. “to fall powerless.”

- The greatest power on earth is Christ-like love.
- “fail...cease...vanish away” – Because they will no longer be needed.

13:9 – “in part” – There is an incompleteness and imperfection to all we do on this side of eternity.

13:10 – “that which is perfect has come” – This is not referring to the canonization of the Scriptures. It is referring to when we will see Him “face to face.” (v. 12)

13:12 – “mirror” – Corinth was famous for the brass used in making mirrors.

- “then face to face” – We will “see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)
- “I shall know just as I also am known” – Relationally. We will have a full and open fellowship with God in heaven.

13:13 – “now abide faith, hope, love” – These qualities are useful in all situations and circumstances.

- “faith” – Believing something simply because God has said it.
- “hope” – The combination of desire and expectation.
- “love” – It encompasses both faith and hope, for love “believes all things” and “hopes all things.” (v. 7)
- “the greatest of these is love” – Love will hold heaven together for eternity.
  - Faith is superseded by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) and hope by fruition (Rom. 8:24).
  - Where love supersedes, there is no need for rules. (Gal. 5:22)

#### **Chapter 14:**

14:1 – “Pursue” – Translated most often as “persecute.” The idea is “hunt down.”

- “love” – Love is the overriding principle. The Church, in all that it does, is to serve one another, encourage one another, and to spur one another on to love and good deeds.

- 14:2-3 – Paul draws a contrast between the gifts of tongues and prophecies to make a point about using our gifts to benefit others while in a corporate church setting.
- Paul is not eliminating the use of tongues from the NT church (v. 5, 18), but he is careful to understand its purpose and the order of its use in the church. (See also Mark 16:17)
- 14:2 – “does not speak to men but to God” – The message in tongues is not directed to people, but to God. It is prayer and giving God thanks. (v. 17)
- “We hear them speaking the wonderful works of God.” (Acts 2:11; see also Acts 10:46)
  - In Acts 2, after the utterance in tongues, Peter spoke the gospel. If tongues was given to share the gospel in foreign languages, then Peter’s message would have been unnecessary.
- 14:3 – “prophecies” – Lit. “to speak forth.” It is not always dealing in future things.
- “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev. 19:10)
  - “edification” – That is “to build up.”
  - “exhortation” – That is “to stir up.”
  - “comfort” – That is “to lift up.”
    - The heart of prophecy is encouragement. There is nothing weird about building up, stirring up, and lifting up.
- 14:4 – “edifies himself” – Paul had previously said that spiritual gifts are given “for the profit of all.” (1 Cor. 12:7) The gift of tongues works to edify the whole church by edifying the individual during their private times with the Lord.
- You cannot give what you do not have. You must receive from God before you give to others.
  - You can pray in the Spirit without speaking in tongues. (Rom. 8:26)
- 14:5 – “I wish you all spoke with tongues” – Paul is not disparaging tongues, but only placing their importance in the proper context. (v. 18)
- Not all believers are given the gift of speaking in tongues. (1 Cor. 12:29-30)
- 14:9 – “easy to understand” – Public edification requires understanding.
- We have a great desire for all people (kids included) to understand the Word of God in our large-group gatherings at Calvary.
- 14:11 – “a foreigner to him who speaks” – It is not that what they are saying doesn’t have any meaning; it is just that we cannot understand it.
- 14:12 – “let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel” – Spiritual experience apart from practical service is unlike the person of Jesus Christ.
- As we mature in Christ, we don’t come to church to get, we come to give.
- 14:13 – “pray that he may interpret” – The interpretation of the utterance in tongues would edify others.

- 14:14 – “my understanding is unfruitful” – Communication and fellowship with God is not limited to our intellect or understanding.
- Our understanding will never catch up to what God placed into our hearts the moment we first believed and were saved.
  - There are serious limitations to any language. When our need to communicate with God goes beyond these limitations, God provides us another means by which to communicate with Him.
- 14:15 – “I will” – Three times. Tongues, prophecy, or any other spiritual gift will not come through a person who is not willing to allow the gift to move.
- “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (v. 32)
  - God desires to work in and through us as we yield ourselves to Him in fellowship and agreement. He doesn’t force or manipulate our bodies as if we were demon-possessed.
  - “with the spirit...with the understanding” – Both are important in the right place and time.
- 14:16 – “say ‘Amen’” – There is certainly nothing wrong with an “Amen” from the congregation today, as long as it is consistent with everyone being blessed, not just the one saying it.
- 14:16 – “give thanks” – It seems the motivation for speaking in tongues is most often to bless and praise God.
- 14:19 – “teach” – The primary means of edification when “the whole church comes together in one place.” (v. 23)
- 14:20 – “in malice be babes” – There are some things we don’t need to understand.
- We are to be “simple concerning evil.” (Rom. 16:19)
- 14:22 – “tongues are for a sign” – The gift of tongues is evidence of the supernatural.
- In the Isaiah 28 passage quoted in v. 21, the foreign languages (tongues) were a sign of judgment as it spoke of the Assyrians in the land of Israel.
  - “a sign” – The supernatural work of God in and through us is to point others to God. The sign is not to be worshipped or adored, it is to point to the reality.
    - If the tongues is spoken in a foreign language that an unbeliever has previous knowledge of, they hear what is spoken to God as a sign. (Acts 2:7-12)
  - “prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe” – Prophecy is to speak edification, exhortation, and comfort to believers. But when an unbeliever overhears prophesy, they will be convicted by what they hear. (v. 24)
- 14:25 – “the secrets of his heart are revealed” – God has a way of speaking right to our hearts, from any text and with any teacher.
- There have been many occasions where someone listening to a message feels as if the pastor is speaking directly about them or picking on them.
  - “God is truly among you” – God is to be the main attraction of any church service.
    - If people leave a service saying “what a good message” or “what great worship” or “what a cool pastor,” then that service has to some degree failed. But if everything else was weak and people leave loving God more than when they came, then the service was worth the time.

- 14:29 – “let the others judge” – Prophecy is to be evaluated, not simply taken as is. (2 Cor. 13:1; 1 John 4:1)
- Be a Berean concerning all things shared at church. (Acts 17:11)
- 14:32 – “subject to the prophets” – The Holy Spirit does not override a person’s control of himself. He works with and alongside our will. (v. 15)
- One of the marks of the Holy Spirit is “self-control” (Gal. 5:23) and a “sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).
  - The Holy Spirit will never do anything Jesus wouldn’t do.
- 14:33 – “God...of peace” – Church is to reflect the peaceful nature of God.
- 14:34 – “not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive” – Paul is talking about speaking in such a way that interrupts or subverts the order of the household and of the church.
- He is not saying that women cannot say anything at all. 1 Cor. 11:5 gives the rules for a women praying and prophesying in the church context. 1 Tim. 2:11-12 says that a woman is not to teach or take authority.
  - “speak” – (Greek “laleo”) This is the Greek word for conversational speech.
  - In the early church, men and women sat on opposite sides of the sanctuary. For a woman to ask her husband a question would disrupt the entire service.
- 14:35 – “let them ask their own husbands at home” – Wives need to honor their husbands enough to get their opinion and insight first.
- Some men don’t lead because their wives don’t expect them to lead.
  - “shameful” – Holding smaller conversations during a teaching or in the midst of a service is a hindrance to the rest of the church.
- 14:37 – “the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” – The Word of God takes precedent over everything else done in the church.
- God’s leading in our lives and the gifting of the Spirit will never conflict with the Word He has already given to us.
- 14:39 – “do not forbid to speak with tongues” – The public use of the spiritual gift of tongues is to be permitted in the proper setting.
- 14:40 – “Let all things be done decently and in order” – There are two sides to this verse. We are to be sure to “let all things be done,” but in all things there is to be “decently and in order.” This is the proper balance of the gifts of the Spirit in the life of a church.
- “decently” – Redpath translates this “with beauty.” Could also be translated “gracefully, or honestly.”
  - “in order” – Redpath translates this “by arrangement.” Could also be translated “not sporadic.”
  - Proper understanding is the goal of any NT church service. (v.19)

## **Chapter 15:**

- 15:1 – “gospel” – Lit. “good news.”
- This is a specific gospel. It is the gospel “according to the Scriptures.” (v. 3)
  - “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8)

- 15:2 – “are saved” – Present tense. The idea can be “are in the process of being saved.” (2 Cor. 1:10)
- This is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers to us. The Gospel tells us how we can be right before God. There is a lot that the Gospel doesn’t do. It doesn’t make you wealthy. It doesn’t promise you that you will never have trouble in your life from here on out. It is not a dating service. It doesn’t force anyone and threaten them at the loss of possessions or life. And the Gospel does not focus on politics and the environment. If those things are of your primary concern, then the Gospel is not for you. But if you know, somewhere in the depths of your heart, that you have offended a holy, righteous, powerful, and perfect God (we call that sin) and you want to be right before Him...then you are ready for the Gospel.
  - “if you hold fast” – That is a big “if.” Please don’t diminish that “if.”
    - The question: Can you lose your salvation?
  - “believed in vain” – Past tense faith is not saving faith.

15:3 – “first of all” – Lit. “of primary importance.”

- “that which I also received” – Effective evangelism is sharing with others what Jesus has first done for us.
- “received” – Paul did not make up the story of the gospel. It was given to him by God Himself. (Gal. 1:11-12)
- “Christ” – That is Jesus. (Jesus Christ is named 10 times in 1 Cor. 1 alone.)
  - Jesus is the only one who can make us right before God. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
- “died for our sins” – Jesus doesn’t save the self-righteous, but sinners who repent. (Matt. 1:21)
- “died” – He died once and for all. (Heb. 10:10,14)
- “according to the Scriptures” – These were the OT Scriptures.

15:4 – “He rose again” – The resurrection is an essential part of the Gospel.

- The Christ’s work on the cross is “payment” for our sins, then the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the “receipt.” It shows that God approved of the sacrifice of His Son and that it accomplished the objective of defeating sin and death.

15:5 – “Cephas” – That is Peter. (Luke 24:34)

- “the twelve” – That is a title for the disciples, now 11 since Judas’ death.

15:6 – “five hundred brethren at once” – In a judicial system that is built on the testimony of two or three witnesses, 500 is rather convincing.

- “fallen asleep” – That is Paul’s idiom for the death of a believer.
  - For the Christian, “We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:8)

15:7 – “James” – That is Jesus’ half-brother. James opposed Jesus before His death (John 7:3-5), but then became a leader in the early church (Acts 15) and wrote the book of James.

- “then by all the apostles” – In Acts 1.

15:8 – “He was seen by me” – On the road to Damascus in Acts 9.

- “born out of due time” – Lit. “still born.” Paul recognizes that his calling to be a disciple was different from that of the other 11.

15:9 – “I persecuted the church of God” – Paul never forgot what he got saved out of. (1 Tim. 1:15)

- Jesus teaches that the one who has been forgiven much will love much. (Luke 7:47)

- 15:10 – “His grace...I labored” – God’s work and human response balanced beautifully.
- “Grace isn’t given because of any works, past, present or promised; yet it is given to encourage work, not to say work is not necessary. God doesn’t want us to receive His grace and become passive.” (David Guzik)
- 15:11 – “you believed” – That is your part if you want to be saved. Believe (ie. trust, depend upon, or lean heavily) upon the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 15:14 – “empty” – Also “vain, or meaningless.”
- If Jesus is not who He says He was and if He did not do what He said He did, then all of this is a waste of time. But if Jesus is not totally trustworthy, then there is no hope either.
  - “If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Gal. 2:21)
- 15:17 – “if Christ is not risen” – That would make him a mere martyr, an example of sorts, but rising from the dead shows that He was a substitutionary sacrifice.
- All the other religions of the world follow dead prophets, gurus, and gods. Christianity follows a risen Savior.
- 15:19 – “most pitiable” – Paul sacrificed the temporal for the eternal.
- Paul did not live a version of Christianity that simply made a good life better. He suffered and was persecuted as a result of following Jesus.
  - Unbelievers will be quicker to believe in eternal life if Christians lived like they believed it too.
- 15:20 – “firstfruits” – The Feast of Firstfruits is the Sunday after Passover. (Lev. 23:9-14) This is the exact day Jesus rose from the grave.
- The first resurrection is a resurrection to eternal life. (Rev. 20:5)
  - “...if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.” (Romans 6:5)
- 15:22 – “as in Adam all die...in Christ all shall be made alive” – There are two possible origins and two possible destinies. (Rom. 5:12-21)
- “all shall be made alive” – All will be resurrected to eternal life or eternal death. (John 5:29)
- 15:25 – “He must reign” – Jesus will reign over sin and death.
- 15:26 – “the last enemy” – Death was introduced into humanity by sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23) and is therefore an enemy of Christ conquered on the cross.
- 15:27 – “He...is excepted” – God the Father is not put under Jesus’ feet.
- 15:28 – “the Son Himself will also be subject to Him” – Jesus, as a co-equal member of the Trinity, will nonetheless remain submitted to the Father throughout all of eternity.
- “all things under Him” – Psalm 110.

- 15:29 – “baptized for the dead” – Is that referring to Jesus as the dead we are baptized into? Or is it referring to a cultic Corinthian practice of necromancy of sorts?
- The Mormon practice of baptizing for the dead is based on this verse.
  - He may be saying that even unbelievers believe in an after-life. We often hear unbelievers say at funerals that their loved one is in a “better place.”
- 15:30 – “stand in jeopardy every hour” – The early-church Christians didn’t try to have the best of both worlds (heaven and earth) as many Americans attempt to live.
- 15:32 – “beasts at Ephesus” – Roman citizens (such as Paul) were not put before the lions. This more likely is a reference to the fierce people of Ephesus.
- “Let us eat and drink” – If resurrection is not true and there is no rewards in heaven granted for service on earth, it only makes sense to try to get as much enjoyment out of life before we die.
  - The lack of a hope of heaven leads to stoicism or epicureanism – Nirvana or Aerosmith.
- 15:33 – “Do not be deceived” – People often claim that their friendships don’t negatively affect them.
- “company” – Speaking of the lifestyles that are influencing us.
  - People who live as if there is no reward of heaven cause us to think more of this earth. (Col. 3:2)
- 15:34 – “Awake to righteousness” – The blessed hope of the church is the return of Christ for His Bride. This hope purifies the church.
- 15:35 – “How” – Many refuse to believe in the resurrection because they don’t understand how it works.
- 15:36 – “Foolish one” – It may be that Paul has been hearing these questions (v. 35) in mockery. (Matt. 22:29)
- “what you sow is not make alive unless it dies” – Resurrection is around us all the time in creation. (John 12:24)
- 15:37 – “you do not sow that body that shall be” – Resurrection is not reconstruction.
- The resurrected life is connected to that which perished, but it is different from the one that perished as well.
- 15:39 – “All flesh is not the same flesh” – God can take similar physical material and organize it differently to accomplish His intended purpose.
- 15:42-44 – “corruption...dishonor...weakness...natural” – Describes our current condition apart from the work of Christ in our life.
- Don’t trust yourself. You are not the answer to your problems. God is!
- 15:44 – “natural body” – Our physical bodies are merely the medium by which we express our spirits.
- 15:45 – “life-giving spirit” – When we are born again, our spirit is made alive by God’s Spirit. This becomes the eternal software that will be ported into our new heavenly bodies at resurrection.
- 15:46 – “the natural, and afterward the spiritual” – Just as there are two natures, so also there must be two births. The first birth is physical; being born again is spiritual.

15:47 – “of dust” – Our physical bodies are made of the same 17 elements found in the dirt of the earth.

15:49 – “bear the image of the heavenly man” – Our bodies will be “conformed to His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21) for “when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

- Jesus’ resurrection body is the example.

15:50 – “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” – Salvation isn’t passed to our children like an inheritance. They have to come to Jesus for themselves.

- There are no grandchildren in the kingdom of God, only sons and daughters.
- “blood” – Blood is apparently somehow connected to the fall. “The life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11) and is to be poured out on the ground. But Jesus, in His resurrected body, said “handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” (Luke 24:39)

15:51 – “mystery” – A truth that cannot be learned naturally. It must be revealed through God’s Word and Spirit.

- “We shall not all sleep” – It clearly says that not all people will die.
- “sleep” – Paul is speaking of the death of a believer. (2 Cor. 5:8)
- “we” – Paul includes himself. He believed Christ would return in His lifetime.
- “changed” – Lit. “metamorphosized.” The word used of Christ’s transfiguration. (Matt. 17:2)
  - This is the first NT reference to the rapture of the Church. (1 Thess. 4:15-18)
  - The imminent return of Christ is an essential, indisputable NT Church doctrine. Jesus could come back today!

15:52 – “moment” – Literally the smallest fraction of time.

- “the twinkling of an eye” – Faster than the speed of light.
- “the last trumpet” – “The trumpet of God.” (1 Thess. 4:16)

15:54 – “Death is swallowed up” – Death is when “mortality...is swallowed up by life.” (2 Cor. 5:4)

15:56 – “sin” – That which eternally separates us from God.

15:57 – “gives us the victory” – Lit. “keeps on giving us the victory.”

15:58 – “abounding” – Lit. “increasing.”

- “work” – Lit. “labor to the point of exhaustion.”
- “knowing that your labor is not in vain” – We realize this truth before making the sacrifice.
  - The reality of heaven in our hearts will lead us to desire to be spent for eternity.

## **Chapter 16:**

16:1 – “the collection for the saints” – This is a “gift to Jerusalem.” (v. 3)

- There was a famine in Jerusalem at this time (Acts 11:29-30) and the believers were especially suffering. (Acts 24:17; Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:13; 9:9-12)
- Paul is not fund-raising for himself or his ministry. He is simply distributing gifts from one portion of the church to another.

- 16:2 – “the first day of the week” – Sunday. This is the day the church regularly gathered and this is the day they took up the offerings. (Acts 20:7; Col. 2:16)
- “each one of you” – It seems that Paul expects everyone to give something. There doesn’t seem to be anyone too rich or too poor.
  - “as he may prosper” – We give to God only what He has first given to us.
    - “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor. 9:7)
    - “If people are prepared, then God will supply both the opportunities and the money so that His work will be accomplished.” (Warren Wiersbe)
- 16:4 – “if it is fitting” – Paul maintained a high level of financial accountability.
- It would be a beautiful picture of unity and care in the church for these believers from all the different churches in Asia Minor to bring this financial gift to the suffering believers in Jerusalem.
- 16:5 – “pass through” – Lit. “travel in a systematic ministry.”
- 16:6 – “spend the winter with you” – This is probably the 3-month stay in Greece mentioned in Acts 20:3.
- 16:7 – “if the Lord permits” – Paul’s plans are surrendered to the Lord.
- Paul will eventually get to Jerusalem, but it happens a year later than planned. (v. 8)
  - “Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken” – Chuck Smith.
  - It is our job to point the ship in the proper direction, but it is God’s job to bring the wind to direct us where He ultimately wants us to go.
- 16:9 – “door has opened” – Even Paul needed open doors. (Acts 14:27; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3; Rev. 3:8)  
God’s calling will line up with His open doors.
- “great” – This speaks of width.
  - “effective” – This speaks of work or activity.
  - “many adversaries” – Paul’s ministry in Ephesus was affecting the sales of the Diana statues that thrived there and eventually started a riot. (Acts 19)
    - Effective ministry and adversaries often go together. Don’t be surprised and don’t stop.
- 16:10 – “Timothy” – Paul’s trusted co-minister. (Phil. 2:19-22)
- “without fear” – Paul often encourages Timothy to overcome his timidity. (1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 1:7)
    - Paul also knew that if the Corinthian church was upset at him that they might take it out on Timothy.
- 16:11 – “waiting for him” – Paul wants to travel with Timothy from Ephesus.
- 16:12 – “our brother Apollos” – Corinth is dividing over its loyalty to Paul and Apollos, but Paul is not afraid to send Apollos to Corinth alone. (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:22)
- “he was quite unwilling” – Paul and Apollos have different leadings...and it’s okay.
- 16:13-14 – “be strong...with love” – The balance between strength and love.

16:13 – “Watch, stand fast... be brave, be strong” – All the tenses are present continuous.

- “Watch” – A military term of guard duty.
- “be brave” – Lit. “act like a man.”

16:15 – “devoted themselves to the ministry” – KJV has this “addicted to the ministry.” It literally means they “deliberately determined to serve.”

16:16 – “submit to such” – Honor and respect those who are serving you in the body.

- “labors” – Lit. “labors to the point of exhaustion.”

16:17 – “Stephanos” – Paul mentioned him in 1 Cor. 1:16.

- “they supplied” – These friends are givers.

16:19 – “churches of Asia” – The 7 churches of Revelation would be included in these churches.

- “Aquila and Priscilla” – These are faithful co-laborers with Paul. (Acts 18:2)
  - Aquila and Priscilla were also influential in Apollos’ life and ministry. (Acts 18:26)

16:20 – “holy kiss” – A kiss on the cheek was a common greeting in the Middle East.

16:21 – “with my own hand” – Paul signs the letter.

16:22 – “love” – (Greek “phileo”) Lit. “fondness, the love of a friend.”

- “accursed” – (Greek “anathema”) Lit. “eternally damned.”
- “O Lord, come” – (Greek “maranatha”) It is an exclamation; a cry.
  - The last instruction of Corinthians is the first and greatest commandment.

16:24 – “my love be with you all” – Despite all the difficult things Paul has written and all that is going on in Corinth, he still loves them.

- “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”